

12th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**ST. PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 16th August 2026****Fr. Stephen Monsieigneur****Readings:**¹ Genesis 45:1-15 / Psalm 133 / Romans 11:13-32 / Matthew 15:21-28**Series Title:** **Called to Discipleship, Who Me? How?****Today's Theme:** ***"Discipleship, Giving, and the Boundaries We Draw"*****Genesis 45:1-15**

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. ³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence. ⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷ God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹ Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me; do not delay. ¹⁰ You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹ I will provide for you there, since there are five more years of famine to come, so that you and your household and all that you have will not come to poverty.' ¹² And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. ¹³ You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." ¹⁴ Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

Psalm 133***The Blessedness of Unity******A Song of Ascents.***

¹ How very good and pleasant it is
when kindred live together in unity!
² It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down over the collar of his robes.
³ It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion.

¹ All scriptural quotations are lifted from New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. (NRSVUE)
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For there the Lord ordained his blessing,
life forevermore.

Romans 11:13-32

Now I am speaking to you gentiles. Inasmuch as I am an apostle to the gentiles, I celebrate my ministry ¹⁴ in order to make my own people jealous and thus save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶ If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; and if the root is holy, then the branches also are holy.

¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted among the others to share the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember: you do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰ That is true. They were broken off on account of unbelief, but you stand on account of belief. So do not become arrogant, but be afraid. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. ²² Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen but God's kindness toward you, if you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³ And even those of Israel, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree.

²⁵ I want you to understand this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not claim to be wiser than you are: a hardening has come upon part of Israel until the full number of the gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "Out of Zion will come the Deliverer; he will banish ungodliness from Jacob."

²⁷ "And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins."

²⁸ As regards the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their ancestors, ²⁹ for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so also they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they also may now receive mercy. ³² For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

Matthew 15:21-28

The Canaanite Woman's Faith

²¹ Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." ²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." ²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶ He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷ She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that moment.

SERMON : What boundaries do we create when deciding to who we will give?

Our readings today invite us to confront a difficult question:

To whom are we willing to give?

More specifically, how do our assumptions, prejudices, and biases shape our decisions about who deserves our attention, generosity, and discipleship?

Our readings open with Joseph² revealing himself to the very brothers who betrayed and sold him. In an act of extraordinary grace, he reframes his suffering through God's redemptive purposes: "Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life"³. Joseph gives not according to what his brothers deserve, but according to what God is doing. His generosity transcends grievance. His discipleship takes the form of reconciliation.

This challenges a common human tendency. We often give selectively. We are naturally inclined to invest our resources, time, and compassion in those who resemble us, affirm us, or have treated us well. Joseph demonstrates that God's economy of grace is wider than our instinct for fairness. Christian giving begins not with evaluating the worthiness of recipients but with participating in God's preservation of life.

The psalmist⁴ proclaiming, "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!" broadens this vision. Unity is presented as God's blessing, a gift that flows abundantly like oil upon Aaron and like dew upon the mountains. Yet genuine unity requires the surrender of prejudice and exclusion. Communities cannot experience the blessing of unity while simultaneously drawing boundaries around who belongs.

The challenge becomes even sharper in Romans where we see Paul addressing tensions between Jewish and Gentile believers, birthed in arguments about who has spiritual superiority. His climactic declaration against the premise of the debate is striking: Paul responds, "For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all"⁵. Notice the repeated word *all*. No group possesses a monopoly on God's favour. No community can claim greater deservingness before God. If all stand equally in need of mercy, then discipleship requires humility. ---Likewise, -- Christian giving becomes an act of sharing the mercy we ourselves have received rather than dispensing benefits from a position of superiority.

Then, as Jesus encounters a Canaanite woman, someone outside the covenant community of Israel, a climax is reached. The disciples want her sent away, reflecting the social and religious boundaries of their day. Even Jesus' words initially seem to reinforce those boundaries. Yet

² Genesis 45

³ Gen. 45:5

⁴ Psalm 133.1

⁵ Romans 11:32

the woman persists in faith, responding, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table"⁶.

The story exposes the biases that shape communities of faith. The disciples had already determined who was worthy of attention. The woman, however, demonstrates remarkable trust and reveals a deeper understanding of God's abundance. Jesus ultimately commends her faith and grants her request. The encounter becomes a powerful witness that God's mercy cannot be contained by human categories.

As Christians, we must ask ourselves: Who are the "Canaanite women" of our context? Who are the people we unconsciously overlook, avoid, or consider less deserving of our resources and care? When we consider terms that distinguish generations such as Generation X, Y, Z, or baby boomers, Christian or not Christian, white-collar or blue-collar, we can see how our bias may be based on any manner of difference, such as class, culture, politics, age, ability, education, or social standing. We may not deny them outright, but we may restrict our giving to those who feel familiar or comfortable.

These readings call us to a different path. Joseph gives to those who wronged him. The psalm celebrates unity across difference. Paul reminds us that all depend on mercy. Jesus expands the horizon of grace beyond expected boundaries. Even including us who fall short of our calling to be a true presence as the body of Christ to others

Christian discipleship is therefore not simply about giving more; it is about giving more broadly. It is about allowing God's mercy to reshape our perception of who is worthy of receiving what we have to offer. When we recognise that we ourselves live by grace alone, we become free to extend that same grace to others.

Let us pray,

Merciful God, thank you for your grace given freely and so lovingly to us. Forgive our prejudices, widen our hearts, and teach us to serve all people with Christ-like compassion. May we share your mercy without favouritism, seek unity, practise generous discipleship, and reflect your love in all we do. Amen.

⁶ Matthew 15:27